

Executive Update

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During the 2005 Budget process I have again asked

department heads and commissioners to be innovative, creative and smarter in their approach to the provision of services. Dutchess County, like many New York counties, has been challenged by economic constraints over the past several years caused by the State mandated Medicaid program, state pension costs and general economic and stock market declines. Some counties are cutting, and in some cases, eliminating services. My administration is working diligently through better management and innovative leadership to ensure we offer a greater level of service at the lowest possible cost to the county's taxpayers so we can continue these critical programs in the community. Some of the highlights on the horizon for Dutchess County you will read about in the pages that follow.

*We hope you will adopt this publication as part of your news regimen. We welcome your comments at countyexec@co.dutchess.ny.us - William R. Steinhaus
County Executive*

COVER STORY:

County Executive creates State/County Park on 27 acres of Poughkeepsie Waterfront

Dutchess County Government has reached an agreement with the NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to transition state owned property at the former Hudson River Psychiatric Center (HRPC) into a riverfront County/State Park located in the Town of Poughkeepsie just north of Marist College.

The park will be named *Quiet Cove Riverfront Park* and preliminary plans for the park include a re-vamped boat ramp and deep water bulkhead for non-motorized boating with picnic and fishing areas, public restrooms, a playground, upland parking and eventually a community meeting room.

The State will maintain ownership of the land while the County will improve and operate the property for use as a riverfront park.

With the announcement in 1997 that the State of New York intended to dispose of most of the HRPC for private redevelopment, County Executive Steinhaus expressed strong interest in retaining its 27 acres of sweeping Hudson River views for recreation and river access.

The property has been used since 1950 by local rowing teams and will continue to offer river access to local high school teams while a permanent rowing center is developed with County support on Vassar College owned property adjacent to the Marist Campus. The plan also includes improvements to roads, paths and lawn areas on and around the property. Additionally, the Hudson River Valley Greenway trail will pass through the new park connecting Hyde Park and Marist College.

In early 1999, Steinhaus set up a broad-based committee to explore future use options and access and site design issues. The committee had over 30 members including critical Dutchess County Departments of Public Works, Planning and Development and the Dutchess County Legislature. These preliminary plans for the site were put on hold for several years while the property was being considered as one of the potential locations for the *Rivers and Estuaries Center*. With the announcement in 2003 that the *Rivers and Estuaries Center*

"Moving forward to ensure Dutchess County is branded the Hub of the Hudson River Valley, this slice of waterfront acreage is pivotal to our success and we are pleased to enter into this cooperative agreement with the State. We have a similar agreement in place in our partnership on the Harlem Valley Rail Trail which the New York State Parks Department has coined the 'Dutchess County Model' as the Rail Trail has experienced tremendous success," -County Executive Steinhaus.



was successfully recruited to Beacon, the County Executive reactivated discussions with the state to convert this property to parkland.

Quiet Cove improvements are slated to be phased in over a three-year period with public access available in 2005.

Did you know ...

- Since January 2004, 6,731 properties have changed ownership in Dutchess County.
- The Dutchess County Partnership for Manageable Growth/Open Space and Farmland Protection Program launched by County Executive Stienhaus has funded three new projects this quarter including the Dover Stone Church Property, Linden Farm and the Steiner Farm of the Town of Red Hook. Since the establishment of the Matching Grant Program, Dutchess County has contributed over \$2 million toward open space and farmland proposals protecting 1,348 acres.
- Rhinebeck, NY joins the ranks of the Top 10 Fall Foliage Spots in the nation, according to an online report posted on 9/15/04 at www.MSN.com (click on <http://local.msn.com/special/fallfoliage2004.asp>). Coming in at number nine, Rhinebeck is the sole locale in New York State designated as a prime target for autumn leaf peeping.



*“Foliage tends to be a particular draw to visitors from far and wide but I like to think of Dutchess County as the place to be all through the year”-
County Executive William R. Steinhaus*



E-GOVERNMENT BITS

Reservations on-line...It's Harvest Time

The Hudson Valley was high on the list for fall fun activities such as spectacular foliage tours, harvest events and U-Pick (apples, pumpkins) destinations.

Dutchess County Tourism again saw success

with its **weekend packages on-line.**

www.dutchesstourism.com



BREAKING NEWS: County Executive Unveils New Buses



Side panels highlight County's Scenic Beauty

Dutchess County Executive William R. Steinhaus announced the Dutchess County LOOP Bus System purchased fifteen new transit vehicles.

“These new Condor buses replace vehicles the County put in service between 1993 and 1996. The buses will be used primarily for our Dial-A-Ride and Para transit services,” said Steinhaus.

The new buses retain the green and blue paint scheme the County has used on its previous vehicles, and are decorated with panoramic photographs from ten different locations highlighting some of the County's scenic beauty. Some familiar locations include the *Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library in winter*, a bird's eye view of *Poughkeepsie from the top of the Dutchess County Office Building*, and the *Hudson River from the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge*.

The vehicles being replaced have logged an average of 325,000 miles of service.

Additional Bus Photo Scenes Include:

- *Holsapple Road, Town of Dover*
- *Hudson River from Magdalen Island, Town of Red Hook*
- *Farm Sunrise, Town of East Fishkill*
- *Summer Morning, Town of North East*
- *Sheafer Road, Town of Stanford Route 44, Town of Amenia*
- *Sunset Over Stissing Mountain, Town of Pine Plains*



County Executive Steinhaus (right) and Mark Pritchard, General Manager, LOOP Transit Services join photographer, Patricia Houston, Graphic Designer, Dutchess County Planning & Development

Where do Your County Tax Dollars go?

- The County's LOOP bus fleet carried 749,943 passengers in 2003 and traveled over 1.5 million miles.
- The County's Highway Department maintains 395 miles of roads and 142 bridges.
- The County's Dept. of Consumer Affairs conducts inspections to ensure residents get what they pay for at the gas pump. Dutchess County residents use 120 million gallons of gasoline each year.

MONEYWATCH BY VALERIE SOMMERVILLE, BUDGET DIRECTOR



2005 Budget Forecast

Once again the most significant increase in our spending plan for the county's 2005 budget will be state mandated social services costs, most notably Medicaid and child institution costs. While the State Budget provides some relief to county taxpayers through a two-year takeover of the local costs for Family Health Plus, this one program represents only 3.7% of our overall Medicaid costs in Dutchess County. The projected annual savings of \$900,000 is minimal when compared to the multi-million total Medicaid budget, and does not come close to covering the annual projected growth in Medicaid. Other major costs driving the 2005 budget are pension, health insurance and public safety.

Pension costs, another mandate over which we have no control, have gone up more than \$10 million since 2002 due to a weak stock market impact on the pension fund as well as reduced employee contributions and benefit enhancements provided by New York State. Increases in employee health insurance costs reflect the nationwide trend in the insurance industry. Our public safety budget has increased by nearly \$5 million net to county over the last 3 years and will call for decisions that recognize the balance required between protecting our residents while being mindful of the burden placed on real property taxpayers. While the multi-million dollar fiscal pressures placed upon the county by the state's ever increasing mandates leave us limited resources for discre-

tionary spending, the proposed budget will include funding to preserve our investment in county roads, parks and building infrastructure and continue funding for technology initiatives to work smarter and more effectively. The 2005 spending plan will also include proposals for achieving efficiencies and maximizing revenues through coordination and cross-systems planning in our criminal justice and health and human services departments. It is already clear the 2005 proposed budget will include a tax increase. This is necessary to begin correcting the structural budget imbalance created by the state imposed mandates, an imbalance experienced by most New York State counties. It's important we maintain our fiscal stability by controlling spending over time, *continued on page 4...*

Departmental Updates



- **Mary Ellen Still, Director of Dutchess County Probation Dept., received the Family Partnership Award given annually to someone who has shown him or herself to be someone who believes in and understands the importance of partnerships and the powerful impact they can have on our community. Congratulations Mary Ellen!**



- **On Aug. 26th the Dept. of Social Services held their annual Foster Family Picnic for 26 families, including 94 children and 38 adults. The famous magician Great Scott entertained all, and no one disappeared!**



- **Elva L. Girton was selected as Deputy Director of the Dutchess County Veterans Service Agency. Ms. Girton is a Vietnam Era Veteran of the United States Army and currently a Second Lieutenant in the New York Guard, Army. Welcome Elva!**



SPOTLIGHT OCTOBER: Child Protective Services

Meet Lorelle Wuerz, Case Manager II/Investigator, in the Department of Social Services. Lorelle lives in Pleasant Valley with her husband, the Rev. Henry J. Wuerz and has three grown children. While refurbishing their old farm house and horseback riding are her hobbies, DSS has become a consuming part of her life. Lorelle started at DSS in January 1995 as a Social Welfare Worker in the Medicaid unit. Lorelle's abilities were noticed and in 2000 she was promoted to a Case Manager I in the Children's Services Division. Lorelle attended many trainings, showed excellent work skills and in 2001 was again promoted to Child Protective Services where she is one of the CPS workers that is on call 24/7 to investigate reports of alleged abuse and neglect.

In Sept. one of Lorelle's calls brought her to the attention of several agencies. A young woman gave birth. The young mother stated that she had concerns about taking the child home. A psychiatrist was called to interview the mother and it was decided that this was a "nervous" new mom and she should "bundle up her baby and take her home". The mother left the hospital on Friday, only to return 1 a.m. Sunday morning stating that the child was sick and she didn't want to take her home. Again she was treated as a nervous new mom and the child checked out medically so they were sent home. Later on Sunday, a supervising nurse reviewed the case and placed a call to Child Protective Services to follow up and ensure the safety of the infant. Lorelle received the call from the NYS Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect. Immediately

Lorelle called her supervisor to conference the case and the decision was made to make a home visit with the assistance of law enforcement to assure that the infant was seen. When in the home she saw a pile of blankets. Under five blankets, sitting in an infant seat with a hat pulled over her face was a bright red infant. In the police officers words "another 10 minutes and the child would have died." Thanks to the cooperation and quick actions of a nurse, Lorelle and a police officer, we can tell you that the child is safe in foster care and mom is working diligently for her return.

Dutchess County wishes to thank all who devote their lives to the protection of the vulnerable in our community especially our employees who work so hard on their behalf.

The hotline for Child Protective Services is 1-800-342-3720

Dutchess County, NY

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Join Our Team

Dutchess County offers a wide array of job opportunities from the high-tech professional, to engineering, to life-guard positions for summer Parks employment. For a listing of employment opportunities in Dutchess County Government and information on upcoming civil service exams administered by the County Personnel Department go to www.dutchessny.gov and click on **Employment Opportunities**. Or visit us on the 5th Floor of the County Office Building.

MONEY WATCH (continued from pg. 3)

restoring our reserves and lessening our reliance on uncertain sales tax receipts and one time revenues. Fiscal stability is also important to preserve our credit rating to avoid higher interest rates on borrowing.

The details of the County Executive's 2005 proposed budget will be submitted to the Legislature by November 1st. A public hearing will be held on December 2, 2004 and a 2005 spending plan will be adopted on December 6, 2004. Ultimately, in the end, the 2005 budget should provide the necessary funding to make the most efficient use of our limited resources to continue the services valued by our taxpayers.



Dutchess County Office Building
22 Market Street, 6th Floor
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

ON OUR HORIZON: COMING SOON...

Central Corridor Pipeline pumping along...

County Executive Steinhaus had New York State authorities in Dutchess to sign their end of the agreement for funding the *Central Dutchess Water Pipeline* which will run 13 miles from Poughkeepsie to East Fishkill and will be capable of carrying 10-million-gallons-of water per-day.

New York State will contribute \$11.25 million dollars to the project with Dutchess County contributing \$10.8 million, IBM \$11.375 million and the Town of East Fishkill will round out the expense with a \$250,000 payment.

"This will be the largest infrastructure initiative ever endeavored in the history of Dutchess County Government."

"This water line is visionary and going in the right place at the right time. It is one project that serves the categories of both economic development and community development" - Chairman Thomas LeGrand, WWA

"One that will allow IBM to maintain their residence in Southern Dutchess and serve as an economic generator to attract new business, industry and jobs to the county. More importantly, a project of this

magnitude will provide communities with a safe water supply so they can focus on residential growth in certain areas while preserving open space in others," Steinhaus said.

The Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority (WWA), Chaired by Mr. Thomas LeGrand, will build and own the waterline. "This water line is visionary and going in the right place at the right time," said Chairman LeGrand.

"The pipeline is scheduled for completion in 2006 and will follow the old Maybrook rail line that will be covered by a new rail trail," said Steinhaus.

Legislator Robert G. Rolison speaks on behalf of the Criminal Justice Council

Member of the CJC Victims Sub-committee, Legislator Rolison (Dist. 8 City/Town of Poughkeepsie) kicked off a collaboration with *Barnes and Noble Booksellers* to produce a bookmark containing emergency contact information for distribution throughout the county. Free book marks include a complete list of area resources to seek assistance. In addition to *Barnes & Noble*, Book Marks are available at county offices, local libraries and police departments



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